



Pres. W. A. Warren,
With the Compliments of
F. A. Johnson,

SHOULD AMERICAN COLLEGES

BE OPEN TO

WOMEN AS WELL AS TO MEN?

A PAPER PRESENTED TO THE

TWENTIETH ANNUAL CONVOCATION

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK,

AT ALBANY, JULY 12, 1882.

BY

Augustus Porter
FREDERICK A. P. BARNARD, S. T. D., LL. D., L. H. D., 1869-1889

President of Columbia College.

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SHOULD AMERICAN COLLEGES BE OPEN TO WOMEN AS WELL AS TO MEN?

By President F. A. P. BARNARD, LL. D., L. H. D. etc., of Columbia College.

If I were not well aware of the power of prescriptive usage in controlling opinion, and of the almost unconquerable tendency in the human mind to cling to the conviction that the thing which long has been is the thing which ought to be, I should be inclined to express astonishment that the question here proposed could be presumed to admit of more than one reply. For what is a college? Is there any thing in the nature of the functions it is instituted to fulfill, which should limit the possibilities of its usefulness to any particular class, or to a single sex? As to social classes we are apt to pride ourselves that this with us is not the case. It is matter of boasting that our colleges and our universities are open equally to young men in any condition in life; and that their highest honors have been often carried off by those who have been compelled, while enjoying their advantages, to labor with their own hands for their daily bread. The youth who resort to our educational institutions are admitted indiscriminately to a perfect equality of privileges. No presumption of superior rank or of superior wealth is recognized as entitling any one to precedence above another. And this is as it should be. For the proper function of a college is to deal with those capacities of men which the accidental conditions of human society have no power to control or influence. Its business is to develop and cultivate those intellectual faculties of the race which give to it its distinctive position as a race in organic nature. These faculties belong to the two sexes equally; it is equally important that they should be cultivated in both; and both sexes are therefore equally fit subjects for the culture which colleges are designed to give. Why then should women be excluded from the advantages which these institutions so freely extend to men?

A great deal of ingenuity has been exercised in seeking answers to this question, and the reasons found have been various in character, and not always consistent among themselves; but most of them seem to have been devised for the purpose of concealing, or evading the confession of the real reason, which is that such exclusion has been practiced by our fathers before us, and that we have not the courage nor the independence to venture on a measure un-

sanctioned by their example or unapproved by their presumed wisdom.

Many of the grounds on which, in the earlier discussion of this question, the exclusion of women from colleges was commonly defended, appear to have been more recently abandoned; at least, at the present time, we hear them less frequently mentioned. One of ✓ these used to be, the natural inferiority of the female intellect, an assumption which there is nothing in antecedent probability, nothing in the comparative cerebral organization of the sexes, and nothing in the study of observed facts to justify. The argument that the number of women distinguished in the past for intellectual superiority is smaller than that of men, is wholly without significance in view of the concomitant fact that, down to the present century, women have been almost universally dwarfed in their intellectual growth, and pressed down beneath the normal mental stature for which nature intended them, by the denial to them of the educational opportunities which men have so abundantly enjoyed. And it is neither fair nor just, when we point to such illustrations of what woman is capable of accomplishing, as we find in a De Staël, a Somerville, a George Elliot or a Harriet Martineau, to reply that these are only the brilliant exceptions which prove the rule; they illustrate, on the contrary, only the fact that no system of repression can entirely smother the fire of intellect, and indicate that, under favoring circumstances, the occasional scintillations which we now observe would be replaced by a general blaze.

✓ Supposing, however, for the sake of argument, that women are naturally the intellectual inferiors of men. It cannot, nevertheless, be denied that women have intellects, nor that such intellects as they have should be properly cultivated. If the experience of some centuries is worth any thing, our colleges present the instrumentalities best adapted for developing the capacities of growing minds. These instrumentalities must be presumed to be adapted to the needs of the masculine mind in very tender years; for I find that until quite recently, it was not unusual in American colleges to receive boys at ages as low as from nine to thirteen. Now whatever we may assume to be the mental inequality between the sexes, no one can maintain that a young woman of seventeen or eighteen is likely to be inferior in mental capacity to a boy of ten or eleven. If such a boy can be improved therefore by the instruction which the college affords, so probably can a girl a few years older, and there is no just reason for denying her the opportunity for such improvement. The argument therefore, for the exclusion of women from colleges, derived from their presumed intellectual inferiority, is without foundation; and if it were not so, it is simply a piece of sophistry designed to conceal the deeper lying reason in the mind of the objector, which perhaps he is ashamed or unwilling to avow.

✓ Another ground for such exclusion has been found in the more delicate physical organization and inferior muscular strength of

woman. It is said that the strain put upon her by the severity of the university course of study, would be ruinous to her constitution and destructive to her health. The visible fact upon which this objection is based is too obvious to be denied, and if the question were of success in a boat race, or of triumph in what young men call the "tug of war," the inference would not be illogical. But muscular strength has nothing whatever to do with brain energy. Some of the profoundest thinkers the world ever saw, have been men of the most delicate physical constitution. We often hear it said that a literary man has been exhausted by over work; but I have never known an authenticated case in which the over work which has broken a man down has been the work of his brain. It is a fact known to every man's experience that the mind does not tire as does the body. On the other hand the mind is always active, always ready for work, even when the bodily strength fails. The mind will often drive the body to effort, even when the wearied physical frame demands repose. Strong emotion, it is true, may wear upon the nervous system, of which the brain is the principal organ; but the calm exercise of the faculties of the pure reason, never. When therefore a scholar or a scientific man breaks down in harness and is said to be over-worked, his prostration is owing to the same cause which breaks down an over-driven horse; and it is no more the effect of an excess of mental labor in the one case than in the other. If the scholar neglects the ordinary hygienic precautions necessary to the preservation of the vigor of the physical frame, if he confines himself from morning till night, and from month to month, to a close, ill-ventilated study and perhaps to a wearisome posture; if he systematically neglects healthful exercise and either starves or over-feeds himself habitually, he cannot expect to escape the consequences which nature sooner or later exacts from those who violate her laws. It is possible, indeed, that a student in college may do himself this violence; but it is not necessary that anyone should do so. I presume that everyone in this assembly may be able to call to mind instances in which young men during their college-life have been so inobservant of the means necessary for the preservation of a sound body as the habitation of a sound mind, as to have broken down in mid-career, and to have been compelled perhaps to relinquish their hopes of a completed education. On the other hand, many of you can doubtless recall others, who, though possessed of the most delicate physical organization, and constantly liable to be injuriously affected by surrounding unfavorable conditions, have nevertheless, by prudence and careful self-control, safely surmounted all the difficulties of the academic course, and come to its close with distinguished honors. Injudicious habits of life will be followed by evil consequences, whether the sufferer be a student or an idler. This law is universal and is irrespective of age or sex.

So far as the effect upon health is concerned, I believe it cannot be successfully denied that the course of superficial study which it has heretofore been common to force upon women, in institutions

devoted to their special education, is just as likely to be injurious, and in many instances is as injurious actually, as the presumably more difficult, and certainly more educationally efficacious, course presented in the college curriculum. To learn to draw or to paint in water colors, at least if it be intended that the pupil shall learn in fact and not merely in pretense, requires close application for many days and weeks in attitudes unfavorable to the free play of the vital organs. An equal amount of time devoted to the study of a treatise on philosophy, though exacting undeniably a more energetic exercise of thought, would be physically far less exhausting. To learn to embroider, an accomplishment which however perfectly acquired, is usually, in later life, treated as the useless thing it is and totally neglected, exacts the devotion of many weary hours to a task purely mechanical, very trying to the physical system, and of no educational value whatever. The same may be said of music, considered only as the power of execution, the end exclusively aimed at in its use as a part of woman's education. Now and then may be found an individual in whom the musical faculty is a native gift, but in the case of ninety-nine out of a hundred, the amount of weary confinement and of physically exhausting labor necessary for the attainment of a sufficient facility of performance to save the young lady subjected to it from being a terror to her friends, is something truly appalling to think of. Music as a science is certainly a most improving and even fascinating study. It is a study, which, educationally considered, may be regarded rather as a recreation than as a task. But music as an art is an accomplishment in which skill is attainable only by the few, and by those few only at the sacrifice of a fearful amount of time and strength; while to the great majority it is not attainable at all. Yet this is a part of the severe regimen to which it has been hitherto customary to subject all our school-girls, without regard to differences of native capacity, and in the face of the certainty, a thousand times over experimentally demonstrated, that not one in a hundred can ever be a musician.

If then the question before us is to be settled by a consideration of what educational course is likely to be most favorable—or to put it in a different form, least prejudicial—to the health of those subjected to it, we are entitled to claim the preference for the course laid down in the ordinary college curriculum: since that taxes far less severely the forces of physical life than the round of laborious trivialities which constitute the so-called *studies* of young ladies in fashionable “finishing schools.”

But supposing it to be true, which I deny, that the studies commonly called *hard* are more trying to the strength than those supposed to be easier, the inference unfavorable to the studies of the college course is by no means the more legitimate on that account. A study is not hard, in the sense of being difficult to the student, in virtue of any thing inherent in its own nature. One study, it is true, may exact a greater mental effort than another to grasp its concepts, or to analyze these into their elements. But the same

effort which is difficult to one mind may be easy to another; and in their relations to the human mind no such classification of studies as easy or difficult is admissible. Every study is easy to the mind to which it is congenial, no matter how abstruse or obscure it may seem to one differently constituted; and every study, no matter how apparently simple, is difficult to a mind which finds it distasteful. Studies, therefore, are not positively difficult or easy in themselves, but only relatively so to the intellect which occupies itself with them. In this consideration we may find a valuable suggestion in regard to the choice of studies for the educational training of individual minds; and here also we find the justification of that modification of the collegiate system, in which, in recent years, the fixed curriculum of study has given way, in many of our leading institutions, to a course adapted to the tastes and in harmony with the native capacities of individual students. It is quite possible, therefore, that a young woman with a mathematical turn of mind may find in geometry or the calculus of variations a more pleasing, and therefore an easier, study than another differently constituted may find in rhetoric, or history, or even in a poem of Tennyson. It is nonsense therefore to attempt to justify the exclusion of women from our colleges on sanitary grounds. They are as little in danger of suffering from excess of mental labor as men.

Were we on the other hand to admit that, to use the words of a recent writer, "the more abstract and severe branches and advanced courses [of collegiate study] put too heavy a strain upon female health and vitality," we shall be driven to the inevitable conclusion that, in endowing women with minds capable of unlimited cultivation, the Creator has at the same time committed the mistake of making such cultivation impossible and has thus defeated his own manifest design. For if to the fullest development of mental power in women what are here called "the more abstract and severe branches" of study are not necessary, neither are they any more so in men, and our scheme of collegiate education is no better than a huge bundle of blunders. If, in order to meet this objection, it is replied that there is no need that the mental capacities of women *should* be fully developed, we may rejoin that this is begging the question, for our entire argument rests on the assumption, which our opponents do not deny, that women ought to be educated.

Oh, yes, women ought to be educated—every one admits so much as this—but then the objector asserts, women ought not to receive *the same* education as men. Well, perhaps not in every respect. Women ought to know something about cookery, the use of the needle, and the management of a household, accomplishments which in the case of men are not entirely indispensable; but exceptions of this kind seem to have very little relation to mental culture. So far as women and men are alike, so far as they are endowed with faculties entirely similar in kind and capable of similar development, and so far as the cultivation of these faculties may equally increase their happiness or enlarge their power of usefulness in life, so far

their educational training should unquestionably be the same. The writer from whom I have already quoted, while admitting that "the opportunities of young ladies for education should be 'equal' to those of young men, yet" holds that "in view of the peculiarities of the female mind and constitution, and the sphere to which woman is normally adapted and destined, the educational opportunities of the women cannot be thus 'equal' unless they are in some important respects different." What the writer means by "peculiarities of the female mind" I do not pretend to understand; but to assume that the kind of mental culture which he describes as "what is known as liberal or college education," is designed to fit anybody, either man or woman, to fill some "sphere," is to contradict its whole theory and to misrepresent its universally admitted design. If, in the controversy which has been going on for the last half century or more between the champions of liberal and of what is called practical education, any doctrine has been maintained more energetically than any other, it is that our colleges are not and ought not to be made schools of preparation for any special department of human activity, but that the object of the culture imparted by them is simply to make the most that is possible of man as an intellectual and moral being, and so to prepare him to fit himself to enter with the largest prospect of success upon any "sphere" of duty or usefulness to which he may subsequently devote himself. If woman's proper province is, as the writer just quoted tells us, and as we seem to have heard once or twice before, "to be the queen of the household and of society," it is not probable that she will find in any American college, even in any one of those recently established and richly endowed colleges designed for the education of women exclusively, a chair of instruction designed to prepare her for the duties of that responsible station. It is not the business of colleges to make "queens of the household," any more than it is to make lawyers or physicians or architects, or engineers: but it is their business, and one which they accomplish well, to make women fit to *become* queens of society, and men fit to be successful in the several departments of professional life.

I have just remarked that no American college maintains a chair of instruction designed directly to make women queens of society. Perhaps I should make one exception. In the list which I was recently examining of the faculty of one such institution (the name and location of which just now escape me), I found an academic title over which I was obliged for a moment to ponder—it was that of a Professor of Preponetries, which I at length concluded could be only that of a professor of the social graces. That institution, I presume, turns out graduates with the diploma of Q. S., but I know of no other. No one, I presume, not even the writer from whom I have been quoting, though he holds that "the educational opportunities of women," should be "in some important respects different" from those of men, expects these special opportunities to be afforded to women in schools. It is from maternal care and domestic train-

ing that girls are to be taught to be "queens of the household," and it is from maternal example and from society itself that they are to learn to be "queens of society."

I was just now speaking of the colleges established within the last fifteen or twenty years for the education of women exclusively. I have before me at this moment the schemes of study of several of these institutions, and I have been comparing these with that of the college to which I myself belong. While I find some differences of detail, I find none whatever in regard to the points made by those who would debar young women from the prosecution of certain studies on account of their alleged difficulty. I find here Tacitus, Juvenal, Horace, Lucretius and Pliny; Homer, Sophocles, Eschylus, Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, and Thucydides; Analytical Geometry, the Calculus, Determinants, and Quaternions; Physics with the Undulatory Theory of Light; Mechanics with the Mechanical Theory of Heat; Astronomy with the calculation of Eclipses; in short, all those studies which tender writers deprecate as "putting too heavy a strain upon female health and vitality." Now what I have to say just here is that the founders of these colleges put no faith in this doctrine of "heavy strains." And what is further apparent from the papers before me is, that the general public treats this same doctrine with no less contempt. For the halls of these colleges are thronged; their students are numbered by hundreds; and in this respect they are exceeded by very few of the older institutions which are open to men only.

The question therefore needs no longer to be argued whether the advantages of a liberal education should not, in some form or other, be thrown open to women, nor whether it is wise or safe to expose women to the asserted dangers of so "severe" a course of mental training as such an education exacts. These questions, after long and vigorous discussion, have been submitted to the tribunal of public opinion, and the decision upon them has been as emphatic as it will be final. The liberal education which has so long been monopolized by men as their exclusive privilege, has at length, in all the variety of its comprehensiveness, been thrown open in these special institutions to women also.

The question may then be asked why, if women have their colleges, access should be demanded for them to the colleges of men also. To this question several answers suggest themselves. First, the colleges of woman so far established, though good in quality, are too few in number for the needs of the country. And if it be inquired, why not then create more, the answer must be that colleges are very expensive establishments, and that, while women's colleges are too few, the colleges for men already existing, are more numerous by some hundreds than the necessity requires, and are not doing by any means the good they are capable of doing. The excessive multiplication of colleges is unquestionably a very great evil, and it has affected very prejudicially the quality of what is called liberal education upon this continent. I have elsewhere

shown, repeatedly, by evidence drawn from the laborious examination of statistics, that, for about half a century past, the number of colleges in the United States has been increasing more than twice as fast as the number of students pursuing the old favorite course of study leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts; so that the average number of candidates for that degree in each college has correspondingly diminished. The consequence of this is that these institutions are not only in general numerically feeble but financially so likewise; and I need not say, in presence of such an assembly as this, that a college which is poor in funds can hardly fail to be poor also in educational character. No one knows so well as those whose duty it has been to endeavor to provide means for giving adequate instruction in the higher branches of letters or science, how severely the pinch of poverty is often felt even in the institutions commonly reputed to be the most richly endowed of any in the country. And if this is so, what must be the case in those whose resources barely suffice to enable them, by the practice of the most rigorous economy, to maintain themselves in operation upon the most modest scale, from year to year.

We do not need for the present, and for a long while at least, any more colleges either for men or for women. If we have any men of wealth among us who are desirous to bestow something out of their abundance for the advancement of the higher education, let them not deceive themselves with the notion that they can accomplish this by adding another and another to the already excessive number of superfluous American colleges; but let them rather apply their benefactions to the strengthening of some of these institutions which already exist; and in selecting the objects of their generosity, let them seek to reinforce the efficiency of such as are strong already, rather than to perpetuate the weakness of those which are tottering to their fall.

We ask then that the existing colleges shall be opened to women *because* they exist, because they possess the means of doing the work desired, and because the right to receive an education, liberal in the highest sense, belongs to women no less than to men.

Nor is the thing which is here demanded a thing new either in idea or in practice. No fewer than one-half the several hundred colleges of the United States are open to women already. From the managers of those which have ventured upon this experiment we hear nothing but expressions of satisfaction with the results, growing more and more emphatic as the years pass by. It is true that the larger number of these institutions are of comparatively recent origin, and that most of them are situated in the newer Middle or Western States. But there are notable exceptions to this statement. Of these we have two in our own State of New York, the Cornell University, and the University of Syracuse. New England has also two, the Wesleyan University at Middletown, and the Boston University at the political capital of the State of Massachusetts.

In foreign lands the progress of opinion, and the growing prevalence of common sense on this subject, have been even more marked than in our own. At Cambridge in England, within the past two years, women have been admitted to the tripos examinations on equal terms with men, the lectures of all the University professors, about thirty in number, have been free to them for a much longer time, and four of the colleges have admitted women to their classes. The University of Durham has been thrown open to women, and the University of London, which is not a teaching body, admits women to its ordinary examinations, and confers upon them the usual degrees in Arts. University College, London, which bears upon its academic register the names of about fifteen hundred students, has long been open to women, who constitute about one-third of its attendance. By a decree of King Victor Emanuel, promulgated in 1876, all the Universities of the Kingdom of Italy are thrown open equally to women and to men. I have heard it stated that the same is true of the Russian Universities, but as to this I have no authentic information. The facts here enumerated however are sufficient to justify the statement that, upon this important subject, "the world moves," and more than that, that the whole world moves. It is folly to suppose that a movement like this can ever be arrested until it shall have run its complete course: and this course will not be complete until all the repositories of knowledge and all the aids to educational improvement which past centuries have created shall have been made everywhere throughout the world equally accessible to all mankind, without any regard to age or sex or race or social condition. A consummation so desirable as this it may not be given to our generation to witness: but the privilege is granted us to lend our aid in bringing it to pass: and even the feeble efforts of individuals may not be wholly without effect in furthering the end so greatly to be desired.

To the student of history, political or social, no more curious psychological phenomenon presents itself, than the propensity in man to resist the indications of manifest destiny, and to flatter himself with the idea that he can successfully oppose the inevitable. We never see a rising tide in the affairs of men without observing at the same time a row of Mrs. Partingtons with their brooms endeavoring to sweep it back; but the tide goes on steadily rising all the same, and these feeble obstructionists, unless they speedily make their escape, are sure to find themselves presently engulfed beneath its waves. That all our American colleges will sooner or later be opened to women appears to me to be a matter of as assured certainty as that the sun will rise to-morrow. The opposition which the proposition at present encounters can have no other possible effect than somewhat to retard the accomplishment of that inevitable result. This opposition, in so far as it is conscientious and not purely the result of prejudice, is founded on the apprehension that the proposed measure, aside from the educational benefits it is intended to confer, may involve consequences of a social nature esteemed to be unde-

sirable. I can perhaps best express what is here meant, by citing once more the language of the writer from whom I have already quoted, who inquires "whether, at the average susceptible age of American college life, say from seventeen to twenty-one, it would be promotive of female delicacy and refinement to be mingled with average collegians, in classes numbering from fifty to two hundred, three hours per day for four years, in the ordinary experience in and around the college class-room?" Of course it is designed that this question should be answered in the negative, and the writer so answers it; but it involves so many unwarrantable assumptions that it may promptly be pronounced a wholly unfair statement of the case. To say that women sitting in the same lecture rooms with men for three or four hours a day are mingled socially with them during that time is to speak nonsense, or rather to say what is not true in fact. I know whereof I speak. As an officer of a college in another State, I have had classes of women, of from fifty to a hundred at once, in daily attendance on my lectures along with my regular classes of young men, without any communication taking place between them whatever, beyond a respectful bow in passing. Young women might with just as much propriety be prohibited from going to church because young men are there; and the same suggestion is still more applicable to attendance at the opera or the theatre. As for mingling out of class hours "in and around the class-room," it is plain enough that the writer has had no acquaintance whatever with "the ordinary experience," of which he speaks. He apparently imagines that the freedom of intercourse between young men and young women in the colleges to which both sexes are admitted, is to be the same as that of young men with each other; in other words, that the young men and young women are to be not only fellow-students, but also boon-companions. Now every one who knows anything about these colleges knows that nothing of this kind is true. There is no more familiarity of intercourse between these two classes of students "in and around the class-room," than there is between the same classes in and around the church-door, nor even so much. On the other hand, on occasions of class-day and other social receptions at the colleges, at which young ladies are freely permitted by their parents and other friends, who are so solicitously anxious in regard to lecture-room dangers, to give their attendance, there is no limit at all to freedom of intercourse, which extends often deep into the night, with the accompaniment of music and dancing and solitary rambles through all the wide expanse of the college halls and college grounds. There is an apparent inconsistency here which perhaps admits of explanation. In sending their daughters to receive instruction in colleges, parents are apprehensive that they may form the acquaintance of young men whom they esteem not to be socially their equals, or who belong to families not on their visiting lists and whom they desire not to recognize socially. But at the college gatherings in which girls are allowed to participate, it is presumed that, as they are accompanied

by young men who are known and approved, they will encounter no other, or no other at least to an extent sufficient to be prejudicial by the momentary contact. How far such a calculation is just it is not necessary to inquire.

In fact, there is no need of social "mingling" between young men and young women in colleges at all; and with proper arrangements there will be none. The experience of schools of inferior grade shows this plainly enough. Of the several hundred academies of the State of New York, under the direction of the Regents of this University, the larger portion receive both male and female students. The scheme of instruction which these institutions attempt to carry out embraces nearly or quite every subject taught in our colleges, and the ages of many of their pupils are as advanced as the average age of college students. Yet though this system has been in operation in these academies time out of mind, we have never heard of any injurious consequences resulting from the intermingling of the sexes in their class rooms or out of them. I myself, in my juvenile days, was a member of such an academy in the State of Massachusetts. In the same academy at the same time there were not only boys and girls of tender age, but also young men and young women quite grown up. During school hours, though all the pupils were assembled together in the same room, there was no possible intercommunication between them; out of school hours the boys gathered together to pursue their sports, or went and came by themselves, and the girls did the same. Between these two classes there was practically no intercourse at all—certainly no more than occasionally occurs in going to or from church.

There can be no doubt that it is this apprehension of a contaminating contact—contaminating simply in a social sense I mean,—that stimulates most energetically the opposition to the extension to woman of the educational privileges of our colleges. Some of the opponents of the measure, like the writer I have quoted, may profess to be contending for the preservation of "female refinement and delicacy." One of the most highly cultivated ladies in New York society remarked to me recently, in speaking on this subject, "I would preserve the bloom on the peach as long as possible." So indeed would I, so would anyone who honors and respects woman, and who would desire to see her always most worthy of honor and respect. I would favor no measure which would leave the slightest trace upon the delicacy of this bloom; but I would have the peach valuable for something more than its bloom merely. And therefore as I would carefully guard against anything which might impair that delicacy in woman which is to make her the ornament and admiration of a refined society, so I would at the same time cultivate her intelligence to an extent which may enable her equally to adorn the world of intellect in which she may be destined to move, and of which she may thus become the animating and inspiring spirit.

To what I have said on the subject I have one more observation

to add, and only one. In urging upon colleges the wisdom, the expediency, and the duty of opening their doors to all earnest seeker after knowledge, without regard to race or sex or social condition, I am not to be understood as advising the use of any means of coercion to constrain young women to avail themselves of the privileges thus offered to their acceptance. If any young woman does not desire the education which a college has to give, I should say by all means do not oblige her to seek it. Do no violence to her freedom of choice. I am pleading only the cause of those who do desire such privileges. I ask that when they humbly petition to be permitted to enjoy them they shall not be rudely repelled. It has seemed to me, when I have been speaking on this subject, as if the opponents of this measure were disposed to treat it as a personal question: as if, for instance, I were urging them to send their own daughters or their own sisters to a college. They have mistaken me altogether. My plea has been a much more modest, and according to my own judgment, an entirely reasonable one, viz. That if they have no wish to secure these advantages for themselves or their relatives, they should not stand in the way of those who do desire them. I have never been able to see why those who prefer that their female friends should not be educated at all rather than that they should be educated in colleges, could not content themselves with keeping members of their own families, or young women in whom they are interested, away from colleges if they please: or why they should ask the colleges also to help them in this matter, by shutting their doors against all other women equally.

I meet occasionally one who tells me, presuming to speak for the sex in general, that the women themselves do not want the privilege demanded, and that they will not accept it if offered. The writer I have quoted even goes so far as to assert of the young women of the Harvard Annex, that "individually and collectively they do not desire co-education, indeed are opposed to it as strongly as the male students." If these things are so, there can surely be no harm in making the trial. Even the most conservative of colleges need feel no alarm lest the quiet of their interior should be disturbed by the sudden irruption of a multitude of students of an unaccustomed order. Experience elsewhere justifies us however in the conclusion that these things are not true. But it matters not in the least to the argument whether they are true or otherwise. If, in the case of a particular college, it were perfectly certain that no young woman is likely for the next ten years to be an applicant for the educational benefits it has the power to bestow, the question would still have the same pertinency as now, whether that college should maintain upon its statute book an ordinance that no young woman should *ever* be permitted to receive those benefits in case some such one should apply at a more distant period in the future. In other words, the question is not so much what is the present demand on behalf of the women, (though apparently the demand is loud enough), but what ought to be the attitude of the colleges toward the subject, without any regard to the demand.

In the sentence which I have last quoted, there occurs a word which I am unwilling to pass over in silence. It is the word *co-education*. By whom this word was invented I do not know. It is an odious word, and I presume the design of the inventor may have been to prejudice the cause we advocate, by making it seem to be our chief object to secure a result which is purely incidental and unimportant, the presence of students of both sexes in the same institution. We might with the same propriety apply the term *co-education* to the teaching of Sunday-schools, because boys and girls are there taught together the words of the Bible; we might as well characterize churches as *co-educational* institutions because we ourselves with our families receive in them from our parish clergymen instruction in religious truth. When I demand for women admission into our colleges, I am demanding for them education, and not the privilege of being educated along with men. The fact of such association may occur as an incident to the concession of my demand—an incident which seems simply to be unavoidable—but I do not regard it as a privilege or the reverse, nor would I turn a finger to further or to prevent it. Let those continue to use this word *co-education* who choose. I have never used it, and I never shall use it. It does not express the thing which, in this struggle, I have at heart; and the thing which it does express is to me a thing in which I have no interest whatever.


I have said just now that the demand for this measure among the people is loud. I repeat it; it is not only loud but is daily growing louder. Evidences of this flow in to me from every side. While I write I receive a letter from a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Mississippi, an institution of which I once had the honor to be the Chancellor, who informs me that his Board has just “adopted the measure of admitting females as students of the University on almost identical conditions with males, and it is now a part of the system of the institution.” The writer further pays me the compliment of adding, “we are indebted in a large degree to your reports for this result.” It is worth while in this place to remark that, while many colleges in the West and Northwest are open to women, hitherto, so far as I am aware, this has not been true of any strictly Southern college. In the inauguration of this liberal educational policy the University of Mississippi honorably leads the way. It is a precedent of which, in the coming centuries, all who are connected with that institution will be proud to the end of time; and I, myself, am proud that it has been made by an institution with which I was once identified, and with which I had once hoped and expected to be identified for life.


An extensive correspondence assures me that the progress of opinion on this subject, of which we thus have evidence in one of our most distant States, is going on equally everywhere throughout the country; and this progress has been nowhere more rapid than in the very metropolis of culture and refinement and wealth, the City of New York itself. The strength which this movement has gath-

ered within the last six or eight months in that great centre of population, is such as to have surprised even those most actively engaged in urging it forward. If it has not yet carried along with it there the whole body of good society in mass, as it gives fair promise soon to do, it has, nevertheless, deeply interested very many of the most distinguished leaders of public opinion in the city, whose powerful influence is making itself every day more widely and more deeply felt. An association has been formed, embracing in its membership several hundred ladies and gentlemen, representing the highest educational culture as well as the highest social refinement of the great capital, designed to organize and concentrate effort for the prosecution of this object. Under the auspices of this association, a public meeting was held in New York in the month of April last, at which a large and deeply interested audience was addressed by a number of gentlemen well known for the powerful and persuasive eloquence with which they are accustomed to champion every good cause. Every day is adding to the strength of this organization, every day is deepening and extending the impression it is producing upon the public mind. To suppose that a movement of this kind can be arrested at its present stage, to suppose that it can fail to go forward until the object at which it aims shall be fully accomplished, is to set at naught all the teachings of history. It is said that "revolutions never go backward." As applied to revolutions of opinion, this is most rigorously true. Political revolutions accomplished by force do seem sometimes to go backward. After the storm which devastated Great Britain in the seventeenth century, came the restoration of the profligate Charles. After the chaos of blood and terror which reigned in France toward the close of the eighteenth, came re-established despotism in the form of the Empire; but these alternations, these outward semblances of retrogression, had no power whatever to check the growth of the undying spirit of liberty which they seemed to suppress, but which only gathered strength beneath its chains, and at length re-asserted itself in the one case in the revolution of 1686, and in the other in the revival of the French republic in our own day. Revolutions of opinion always go forward. In regard to the subject which occupies us to-day, we have seen such a revolution for some years proceeding under our own eyes. It is a genuine revolution. Every day that passes, its manifestations are becoming more and more decided. Every day that passes is adding to the number of men and women whose judgment commands the respect of the people, and whose championship of any cause may usually be regarded as a sure presage of victory, who are openly avowing themselves its advocates and lending their active efforts to stimulate its progress. The end of all this is not probable only, it is certain. Sooner or later, the whole community, with a single voice, is going to demand that the governors of our highest institutions of learning shall no longer keep them closed against half the human race. Let not then the present champions of this just measure of generous and enlightened liberality be cast

down, if their praiseworthy efforts fail to meet the immediate success which they deserve. Let them not be discouraged by any rebuffs they may receive from those who happen to hold in their hands for the time being the power to thwart their aims. Let no present disappointment be allowed to chill their enthusiasm or to dampen their zeal; but let them continue to possess their souls in patience, animated and cheered by the assured conviction that the time is not far distant when it shall be as much among the curiosities of history that one sex should ever have been debarred from the educational privileges accorded to the other, as it will be that the curse of slavery should have continued to darken the escutcheon of our Republic for a century after its foundation.



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